

F Disciples 611

Chapter 611: Side Story - All About Bandits (IV)

The middle region of the Martial Brilliance Continent was known as the land of bandits. From east to west, out of a hundred thousand kilometers of land, it was said that every meter of it was occupied by a bloodthirsty criminal that was willing to betray a friend or sell a family member to make some money. The situation wasn't truly this bad but it was close.

The relatively peaceful lands to the north and south made no attempts to subjugate the middle. One reason was that the continent was truly massive and nobody had the manpower. Another was that lawlessness and chaos had their own benefits because they created a breeding ground for new talents.

Peace and abundance led to laziness and contentment. Cultivation did not fare well under these conditions. On the other hand, the human ability to survive and struggle, to fight with each other and compete through bloodshed, led to breakthroughs that were otherwise impossible.

And within this land of bandits, there was a specific area that drew the interest of a certain bandit, one named Immortal Sword Bandit Lin Huzhong...

It was a moonless night. Chen Wentian, using Chen Mo's shadow body, and disguised as Lin Huzhong, arrived above a solitary mountain fortress. It was made out of grey stone hewn from the nearby mountains. Situated on a plateau with cliffs on three sides, it seemed almost impregnable. Its size wasn't too excessive but could still house several thousand comfortably. Most importantly, there was also an immortal bandit living inside.

He watched as a large group of people approached the fortress from all sides, silently, stealthily. They were his people, his bandit gang.

The Red Sun Gang took the main road that wound up the southern side of the mountain and towards the main entrance to the west. They came in full force and were armed to the teeth. Numbering over five hundred, they were kitted out with brand-new armor and tall shields. Since they weren't really good at anything, they had been assigned the role of meat shields. But Chen Wentian wasn't a sadist so he had at least spent some money to help them in their task.

The Iron Lock Crew climbed up the cliffs to the north. As experts with chains, they knew how to use them to climb and scale tall cliffs. These professional kidnappers were ill-suited for besieging a city but since their immortal bandit lord had commanded it, nobody dared to slack off.

The eastern cliffs were given to the Blood Hook Gang. They were assassins so they naturally knew how to scale such obstacles. They made even better progress than the Iron Lock Crew and were additionally assigned to set up rope ladders for the remaining gangs of the alliance.

The Diamond Triad and the Red Willow Tower were ill-suited for combat so they were left in the rear but the Black Valley Company and the Yellow Turban Gang followed the others up the cliffs. The Black Valley Company was a powerful group of mercenaries. They were prepared for all kinds of battles and were not afraid of injury or even death as long as they were paid. The Yellow Turban Gang was similarly capable. They made a living robbing other people so they naturally had to be able to fight for their lives.

In a short while, the mountain fortress was surrounded on all sides. Almost two thousand souls from Lin Huzhong's gang alliance were present and ready.

But before they could attack, the fortress came to life. Torches were lit in quick succession, forming a ring of fire around the walls. Shouts and yells filled the air as the inhabitants suddenly popped up from behind the battlements waving swords and spears.

"Red Sun Gang! What are you doing here?" A booming voice brought a sudden silence.

A solitary figure flew into the air above the main gate and faced the largest group of attackers. It was the immortal that owned this place. From a distance, only one word came to everyone's mind to describe that person, rotund. They were almost as wide as they were tall. Their massive belly made them look like a floating balloon instead of a real person.

The leader of the Red Sun Gang, Wang Landi, who was another one of Chen Wentian's souls, strode out of the mass of armored warriors and pointed a sword up at the immortal, "Naturally, we are here to take over this fortress. My Red Sun Gang is in need of a new base."

He didn't even bother addressing the immortal with any respect. Such an insignificant character within the Martial Brilliance Continent was nothing noteworthy.

"Hahaha!" The obese immortal laughed uproariously, their white hair shaking wildly in the wind, "Hahaha! This is the funniest shit I have ever heard!"

After laughing some more, he calmed down enough to point a finger at Wang Landi, "I don't exactly know what happened to you people. In the past, I could have considered the Wang twins, Immortal Red Dawn and Immortal Red Dusk, as friends... well, swine friends. Heh. Anyways, I already know that they died so I really don't know what you all are playing at. I will give you one chance to live. You all can obediently join my Black Mountain Stronghold, the Red Sun Gang and all the little gangs you've brought today. I will give you one chance. If you refuse, I will simply kill you all."

Wang Landi's sword didn't waver as he answered, "There is no need because my lord's blade has already arrived."

"What..."

In that instant, before the rotund beast could explode in rage, a beam of sword light descended from the moonless sky. It came so fast that it formed a bright, straight line as if it was drawn by a divine being. It was only as thin as a finger. From a distance, it was thin as a thread.

The unstoppable sword beam punched through the unprepared immortal's forehead and exited out the back. Quicker than one could blink, it was over. The light disappeared and so did the suffocating sword energy.

And as the excessively fat immortal crashed into the ground in front of the gate, another immortal who was also fat, but not so shamelessly large as the first one, descended from the sky.

Chapter 612: Side Story - All About Bandits (V)

The Black Mountain Stronghold changed ownership in a single night. The previous lord, a whale of a man known to the locals as Immortal Black Mountain Liu Chang, ceased to exist and was replaced by Immortal Sword Bandit Lin Huzhong.

It just so happened that Liu Chang's specialty was his size. He was a physique cultivator that utilized his mass to generate massive strength akin to a mountain. This made him a sitting duck for the all-mighty penetrative force of Dugu's 10th Sword. And since Chen Wentian was a Spirit King now, his sword attacks were no longer the same as before. Ordinary Spirit Lords such as the unfortunate Liu Chang could do little to defend against it.

As for Liu Chang's soul, Chen Wentian had never even considered assimilating it. He had standards. He wasn't so desperate that he would take over any random soul. A character like Liu Chang was too fat, too despicable, and totally not his style. He had no desire to be an ugly bastard.

There was also the fact that taking over a human soul at the Spirit Lord Realm was no guarantee. The difference between an immortal and a mortal was like heaven and earth so there was little risk in him taking over mortal souls. They simply lacked the power to resist. However, the gap between a Spirit King and a Spirit Lord was much smaller. A Spirit Lord could also have many secret life-saving techniques and treasures. And a human soul would not cower before the might of his divine blue dragon soul. No, it was much safer and easier to use the soul of Liu Chang as fuel.

"My Lord Bandit, the stronghold is now yours." The solemn figure of Wang Landi said with a bow.

He stood in the middle of six other people, each the leader of their respective gangs. They had finished subjugating the entire Black Mountain Stronghold and had been reporting their status. Yet, since Wang Landi and Chen Wentian's souls were one and the same, he already knew everything and had not been paying attention.

Wang Landi continued without waiting for a response, "True to your predictions, that beast surnamed Liu had an excessively large harem. Aside from the members of his gang and their families, almost a third of the population of the stronghold are women, all young women that seemed to have been kidnapped to serve the perverted immortal. And per your instructions, Madam Red Willow the Red Willow Tower will be responsible for their care."

At this, one of the two females within the seven gang leaders took a step forward and bowed, "My Lord Bandit, as the madam of the Red Willow Tower, we will take care of these women and handle them in accordance to your disciple, Ren Jinjin's, guidelines."

Chen Wentian nodded lazily.

The Red Willow Tower was a brothel that managed to survive and thrive within a lawless land. As such, its leader known only as Madam Willow was a talented woman with an eye for people and business. Ren Jinjin was Lin Huzhong's first disciple and his, Chen Wentian's, first disciple Lin Qingcheng. Since Lin Qingcheng was interested in her, he naturally wouldn't bother interfering.

"Additionally," Wang Landi said, "Out of these women, we have identified a particular person that Liu Chang was especially fond of. The other women told us that she would serve him at least once a week and seemed to have his ear regarding various matters within the stronghold. They were also under the impression that she was especially important to him."

Chen Wentian opened an eye, interested for the first time. This was the person he was looking for. He had secretly observed the stronghold for a long time and she was the reason he had come.

He stood up and waved to the seven gang leaders, "Bring her to my room. The rest of you can leave."

A while later, the door to the lord's room opened and a figure glided inside. She wasn't too tall or short. She wore a thin nightgown that clung to her frame. As she walked, the outfit formed a perfect outline of her figure, her wide hips and perky breasts.

But Chen Wentian's focus wasn't on her body but on her face. She had a thick head of inky black hair that fell down her back. Her eyes were gray and filled with intelligence. Although she couldn't be considered beautiful compared to the likes of Peng Lingxi or even Li Yuechan, she was quite pleasing to the eye.

And most importantly, there was something about her that triggered his soul sense, something special that he hadn't encountered before.

She bowed and said, "My Lord, this one is named Guo Xiao."

"Mmm, I know." Chen Wentian said and gestured towards a set of chairs and a table.

He was about to take a seat when there was the slight sound of cloth sliding against bare skin. He turned around and was met with Guo Xiao's naked figure. Her nightgown pooled at her feet. She stood there with her hands at her sides, not hiding anything from his eyes.

He savored the sight of her for only a brief moment before he pulled her clothes back up with his spiritual force.

"It seems my subordinates played a prank on you. I didn't ask you here for that." He said.

"Why..." She stood frozen.

It wasn't hard to guess her thoughts. His disguise, the Immortal Sword Bandit Lin Huzhong, was also a fat man. Although not as rotund as the prior bandit lord, the two of them seemed alike in the eyes of mortals. Some of the locals even thought that this Lin Huzhong had come to the stronghold specifically for Liu Chang's harem.

Eventually, Guo Xiao sat down opposite Chen Wentian and he spoke again, "I killed Liu Chang and took over the Black Mountain Stronghold because I found out about his secret business."

Her pupils flashed with something but she didn't say anything so he continued, "Within the mountains behind this stronghold is a peculiar cave system that is home to a rare species of demons. They are known as gloomy wisps, a type of void and darkness attribute elemental spirit. They are demons but mostly harmless. In fact, humans will hardly notice their existence since these gloomy wisps will simply disappear and they will be impossible to find, even for Spirit Lords and Spirit Kings. The question then becomes... how did this Liu Chang, who has no talent in spatial Dao or darkness Dao, manage to produce so many space-attribute spiritual crystals to sell on the black market?"

This was the most critical question. Just like his colony of void bees, gloomy wisps could be harvested for their space-attribute spiritual energy which was critical for creating such valuables as spatial bags and teleportation arrays. They were extremely profitable. There was only demand and minuscule supply.

Since he often sold space-attribute spiritual crystals, he was somewhat familiar with the regional market and a few of the local players. Utilizing his shadow fox, he tracked one of them back to this place, a private gold mine hidden within a lawless land. Such a treasure, even kings and emperors would drool with greed.

"It was because of you, right? Miss Guo?" He asked. "It was all because you have a special talent, a talent to subdue these gloomy wisps that I have never seen or heard of before."

She didn't reply. She refused to say anything for a very long time. Fear and uncertainty were visible in her eyes.

Chen Wentian rested his chin in his hands and studied her. He wanted her... but not exactly the way he desired his disciples in the past. He simply felt that she was an interesting person that he could use. Being attractive and the fact that she had given him a free show also didn't hurt.

He smiled at her in what he hoped was a friendly expression through his thick disguise.

"Miss Guo, why don't you work for me?"

Chapter 613: Side Story - Family Matters

The Eastern Sanmu Metropolis cared little about the happenings and misfortunes of cultivators outside of its borders. The tragedy that befell Everblade City was a notable event in the southern and eastern regions of the subcontinent but it hardly caused a stir within the massive metropolis. Indeed, it was possible for many to live their whole lives here without a care for the outside world.

And the oldest, grandest ruler of this wonder of human creation was the Huang Family. One of the Four Kings, they resided in the Golden Tower and lorded over the masses as only a true king realm faction could.

Today, a most special event had taken hold of the Golden Tower and the massive pagoda was alive with activity from top to bottom. It was not a holiday or a celebration, it was simply the fact that Immortal Ardent Duchess Su Tan had woken up. She had suffered great injuries due to the demon attack. It had taken countless doctors and precious medicines but she had finally returned to the land of the living.

It could not be understated just how popular she was among the Huang Family. She had more admirers than blades of grass across an endless plain. As soon as they heard, they stormed up to her level and lined up in front of her room bearing gifts they had already prepared. Although she was married, although she did have a husband, nobody showed that person any face.

A bystander might feel like this was the strangest and saddest sight they have ever seen, hordes of men, young and old, strong and weak, vying for the attention of a married woman.

"These useless bastards!" A furious shout was heard by almost no one at the very top of the Golden Tower.

Immortal Solemn Duke Huang Wuji stood in the middle of an opulent room, breathing heavily, his body glowing with golden energy. The object of his anger, a crystal tea cup lay shattered on the floor.

"Please, my king, it's nothing you should be angry about." An even older and frail-looking man stood to one side with a blank expression.

His name was Chief Caretaker Ma, a eunuch that served the Huang Family. He waved his hand behind his back and a pair of younger eunuchs appeared from somewhere and quickly swept away the mess of broken crystal.

"I have to be angry!" Huang Wuji continued, "How can I not be angry when so many shameless bastards are living under my roof?"

"My king, those are all your sons or grandsons..." Chief Caretaker Ma replied carefully.

"They can all go to hell, all of them are useless!" Huang Wuji shouted and then finally slumped into a chair.

This matter had been a sore spot for him for a long time, the fact that everyone in the Huang Family was so enamored with Su Tan. He didn't know if he should laugh or cry.

"Why did she go and marry that useless person..." He brooded as he picked up another crystal cup and took a drink.

The old servant waited in silence for a while before speaking, "My king, at a glance, this Huang Zhiheng from the thirtieth generation is indeed a useless person. His practice of the Gold Power Law has not reached the third power after so many years. His cultivation level might not reach the lesser realms of the Spirit Initiate in this lifetime. Compared to geniuses of the eighteenth generation or the twenty-first generation or even the ones in his generation, he is worthless like dust."

Huang Wuji snorted in annoyance and continued to drink.

The old servant continued, "But what if this is exactly what Lady Su wanted from the beginning? Only with such a weak husband could she have total control of everything and grow to the position she is now.

"Nonsense!" Huang Wuji snapped, "She is where she is now because I allowed her to. I gave her the true secrets of the Gold Power Law and I trained her. She should be thanking me instead of that idiot!"

Chief Caretaker Ma's lips twitched slightly in amusement, "My king, why don't you just admit that you want her all to yourself, that you want to be the first in line to see her and no one else?"

The immortal let out a barking laugh and then waved his hand, "Old Ma, you're still the one that knows me the best. That's right. What I wouldn't give to make her my woman... But it doesn't matter. How can a king such as I steal my son's woman? Even if he is a useless waste of air, he is still my son. And as for these other sons of mine, I know for certain that they can lust over her all they want but nothing will happen. She doesn't care about a single one of them."

"Does Lady Su have really such a heart of stone?"

Huang Wuji shook his head, "She is beyond words. I don't think I could have won her heart even in my youth. The only thing I could have done is force myself on her but I don't have the heart to ruin such a treasure."

He slapped the armrest and sighed, "Whatever, talking about her has kind of gotten me in the mood."

The servant bowed, "Yes, my king. They have been prepared in your bed chamber."

Huang Wuji nodded and stood up. Without a look back, he strode into the side corridor attached to the main room and then entered his bedroom.

Within stood a large number of young women. Each one was a beauty brimming with charm and allure. They all watched the wizened immortal with anxious yet excited expressions.

Huang Wuji stopped and studied them for a while, appreciating each woman's half-naked figure before moving on to the next. They were about the same height. Their hair was black and sleek. Their physiques were all around the same and the exact type he enjoyed. Breasts not too large but perky and firm, hips not too wide but still enough to exude sexuality, limbs that were slender but not too skinny, these were the exact traits of Immortal Ardent Duchess Su Tan, the one woman he wanted but couldn't have.

"You all understand what you are here to do?" He asked gruffly. "You are here to bear my children. They will become members of the thirty-first generation of the Huang Family. And you will naturally become a part of the family as well."

"Thank you, King Huang!" They all said and bowed.

His eyes continued to roam as if he was trying to choose one, "No need to be anxious, the order won't matter. Be patient. I will make sure to impregnate each and every one of you before you leave this room."

"Yes, King Huang!"

He beckoned a hand towards the one that reminded him most of Su Tan. With a gentle surge of golden energy, he pulled her to him and together, they fell onto the bed. As the silk drapes closed around them, his voice mixed together with the coquettish cries and pleasure-filled moans.

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Chapter 614: Concerning Cultivation

A large, luxurious horse carriage traveled through the middle of a wide avenue within Beast God City. The horses were tall and powerful. The driver also wasn't simple and exuded a heavy aura of a powerful beast art cultivator. Even at a glance, the bystanders could tell that this person was an elite warrior within the city. They couldn't guess who could be sitting inside but there was no doubt that it was some big shot.

The carriage rolled through the city which was still recovering from the war with the insects many months before. Most of the visible damage had been repaired. Brand new buildings had sprung in the place of those destroyed in battle. But there was a noticeable lack of people in the streets.

The population had yet to fully recover and many houses remained empty. The Lion Lord and the Eagle Lord were both reluctant to bring in people from the countryside and other territories they controlled. Their population would naturally recover within a few years as long as they enticed the existing population to have more children. This would then naturally lead to a boom of young people who could lead the Beast God Sanctum into a new era.

The carriage eventually came to a stop in front of an inconspicuous manor. It was obviously a residence for nobility with tall privacy walls and guards at the entrance. But its size was nothing to be envious of, even for ordinary residents of the city.

The squad of six guards formed two protective columns of three to greet the arrival. The rear door of the carriage swung open and a figure got off, their visage mostly hidden by the tall guards. At the same time, the main doors of the manor swung open in invitation. That guest quickly went inside and greeted the owner of the residence.

"My Lord Qiu, welcome to my humble home." He Xingping bowed deeply and said.

Before him stood one of the Spirit Lords of the Beast God Sanctum, Immortal Tempest Badger Qiu Chuyi.

Chen Wentian, through He Xingping's soul, noted that Qiu Chuyi had largely recovered from the wounds he had suffered during the demon attack. His immortal aura was as strong as ever.

"Executive Elder He Xingping, it has been a while. Come, let's talk inside." Qiu Chuyi said.

"Yes, Lord Qiu, please, this way."

The two men casually conversed as they made their way to the modest sitting room. After the servants served tea, Qiu Chuyi turned to He Xingping with a smile.

"How is your daughter? He Zhuoyan was it... how old is she now?" He asked.

Chen Wentian nodded, "I am honored that Lord Qiu remembered. Zhouyan is almost one year old."

Qiu Chuyi laughed and stroked his beard good-naturedly, "Wonderful! My great-grandniece is growing up so quickly. Hahaha!"

Chen Wentian had to think about it before he remembered. He Xingping's wife, Qiu Jingyi, was the immortal's grandniece. Due to this distance in blood relations, her family was considered a branch family and never given as much attention as the main descendants.

Chen Wentian chuckled politely, "True, children are so sneaky like that, growing so much when we don't have enough time to pay attention."

After some more light-hearted conversation, Qiu Chuyi put down his cup and turned to He Xingping, "Xingping, I'm here today for two things. You are a smart man, I'm sure you have already heard."

"Please speak, my lord."

Qiu Chuyi replied, "First, it is a custom for the infants of my family clan to have talent assessments around one year old. I'm sure the He Clan is the same and normally your daughter's future cultivation will be the He Clan's responsibility. However, I have heard some positive rumors about your daughter so I hope you won't object to me giving her an early evaluation."

Chen Wentian sighed in his mind but could only agree. People loved to talk and the Beast God Sanctum was still a small community even though it was such a big sect. He didn't know if it was his wife or any of the servants bragging and it didn't really matter.

He already knew what the rumor was about, the fact that He Zhuoyan had a very big appetite. Her mother's breastmilk wasn't nearly enough and they had already hired a second nursemaid. She was also very particular and only drank breast milk. Other babies would already have started with solid food but she flatly rejected it all in favor of just milk.

"Is my lord referring to my daughter's eating habits?" He asked.

Qiu Chuyi laughed and nodded, "It is a bit strange but also potentially good. A great appetite is always a positive sign in our sect. It means that the baby's body is strong and that she has great potential. Although children cannot truly cultivate the way of Body Refinement until they reach puberty, their innate talent can still be cultivated from a young age. A naturally large appetite can lead to naturally superior strength. And naturally superior strength can lead to a resilient spirit, sharp mind, and other advantages. If well taken care of, she can definitely become a future talent."

The immortal continued to nod and stroke his beard. From Chen Wentian's experience, this Qiu Chuyi was a crafty person so it was difficult to see where this conversation was going.

Qiu Chuyi continued, "This is a little secret but since you are family, I won't be stingy. My closed-door disciple, Yang Cang, is the most talented disciple I have ever taught. He also had a fearsome appetite as a child. Although he didn't have a fixation on breastmilk like your daughter, he could eat a whole chicken by himself when he was one year old. By five, he could eat a whole lamb in one sitting."

He paused and laughed heartily at the memory, "And if I had not found him, he would have probably driven his whole family into poverty. But thankfully, I did and took him in. I gave him whatever he wanted to eat, the best beast meats and as much as he wanted. With such an upbringing, he was able to become the most talented cultivator of his generation within the Lion Faction. I think he has a good chance of following my footsteps and becoming a Spirit Lord."

Chen Wentian nodded along with the tale and filled the immortal's tea cup, "My lord, are there any other identifiers for infants to judge their innate talent? I am not well versed in this area."

In truth, Chen Wentian had already done some research but he wanted to hear another immortal's opinion. The world of cultivation was so vast and the possibilities endless. Matters concerning cultivation were often hidden as family secrets or clan treasures. There was a limit to what he could find out from the Beast God Sanctum, even as an executive elder. He had wanted to take over Yang Cang's soul during the Monster Fighting Competition but didn't find an opportunity. He also disliked that person on a fundamental level so he didn't bother to try anymore.

"You are right, there are." Qiu Chuyi said, "Certain physical traits unseen in others may be an indicator. It is often said that if a baby has a birthmark that is in the particular shape of an animal, they will have a high affinity for beast transformation arts relating to that. This could be debatable but often works out than not. In other cases, I have seen babies that arrive into the world with a full head of hair that has a

higher intellect and talent for cultivating mind arts than the rest. Other traits can depend on specific behavior observed during childhood. Appetite is one but there are many more that can indicate unnatural talent. So... that said, does your daughter have some other special trait?"

True to Chen Wentian's impression, this wily old immortal was quick to take the hint. He nodded and said, "Lord Qiu, if you would please, it is better if I show you."

"Alright, lead the way."

"Please, this way."

Chapter 615: Schools of Thought

The two men walked towards the rear of the manor. The mood was still cheerful but filled with more seriousness. This Qiu Chuyi was a man of many tricks but he was still a serious person. And since He Xingping was an executive elder with a large amount of influence, the immortal could at least offer this amount of respect regarding the matter of He Zhuoyan.

It didn't take long for them to reach the nursery. It just so happened that the mother and child were in the garden. Both of them enjoyed the fresh air and aura of nature instead of the stale and lifeless environment indoors.

"My lord immortal!" The servants immediately fell to their knees.

Qiu Jingyi was caught sitting in a rocking chair with He Zhuoyan laying across her chest. As she scrambled to get up, Qiu Chuyi's lighthearted laugh made her pause.

"Grandniece, no need. No need. It is I who intruded on your sanctum. Please excuse my rudeness." He said.

Qiu Chuyi's face flushed slightly. She had never been called grandniece by this powerful figure and didn't know what to think about that. She nodded her head low as best as she could and responded, "My thanks, Lord Qiu. Welcome."

After exchanging some more pleasantries, the reason for the visit was made clear and Qiu Chuyi offered her daughter to the immortal.

Qiu Chuyi's spirit rose as he cradled the baby in his arms. He laughed and gently swayed his body as He Zhuoyan babbled nonsense at the stranger before her. She raised her stubby arms and tried to grab at him this only made him laugh louder. All in all, her performance was no dissimilar to any other baby. There wasn't anything special about her... except for her left eye. Instead of brown like normal, it was a bright green like freshly sprouted leaves in spring. As she glared up at the offending person who wasn't her mother or father or nursemaid, her left seemed even brighter.

Qiu Chuyi handed the baby back after studying her and stroked his beard in a thoughtful manner, "Strange, truly strange. Very curious."

"Is... something wrong with her?" Qiu Jingyi asked anxiously.

He waved his hand and answered, "Not at all, she is perfectly fine. Her eyes, I don't know what to make of them. I tried to test her with a tiny bit of my immortal aura but there was no response. But she certainly seems very spirited and headstrong. Remarkable."

"My lord," Chen Wentian, as He Xingping, chimed in, "Does this mean that her left eye is nothing special?"

The immortal shook his head, "I didn't say that. Her eye is special, I'm certain of that. But I have to admit that my knowledge is limited. I will review the records in our archives but off the top of my head, I can't say I have a proper explanation. I will have to visit the Eastern Sanmu Metropolis and ask around."

Chen Wentian produced a small cloth bag and offered it with a bow, "My lord, I don't have much but this is ten kilograms of red spiritual crystal. I hope this can assist you in finding an answer for my daughter."

This wasn't a large amount for an immortal but it wasn't small. For an executive elder like him, it was a considerable hit to his finances, if not all of it.

Qiu Chuyi swiped the money away instantly but nodded once in affirmation. Both men understood the situation and it made their interaction much easier.

He turned towards Qiu Jingyi and asked, "Moving on, about the other matter of little He Zhuoyan having a big appetite but only for breastmilk, can you tell me more about that?"

Qiu Jingyi smiled gently and replied, "Lord Qiu, it is like this..."

She described having to nurse her daughter constantly. She even ate a lot of nutritious meals and took many herbal supplements but it wasn't enough. He Zhouyan drank her dry and she had to hire two high-quality nursemaids who could produce even more milk than her. The three of them could just about keep up but if He Zhouyan continued her habits as she grew bigger, they would soon need to add another nursemaid.

"Hahaha, what a little glutton. How amusing." The immortal stroked his beard with a wide grin, "Have you tried cow milk or goat milk? Or the milk of other beasts?"

Chen Wentian interjected before Qiu Jingyi could, "We have, my lord, but she rejected them all..."

It wasn't just ordinary milk either. She rejected bear milk which was known to give an infant greater strength. She refused lioness milk which could provide a strong fighting spirit and bravery. She even threw up after just a mouthful of horse milk that could give one speed and endurance. It was the same for wolf milk, various types of monkeys and primates, and even dolphin milk sourced from the southern ocean.

"Interesting..." Qiu Chuyi stroked his beard with a blank expression. "Truly a puzzling little girl."

He couldn't come up with anything more intelligible for a long while and eventually let out a cough of embarrassment, "He Xingping, grandniece, forgive this old man for not being able to find a satisfactory answer. I will definitely make this a priority the next time I visit the metropolis."

Both of the bowed and Chen Wentian answered, "My lord, that is all I can for. I am already beyond gracious that my daughter has caught your attention."

"Mmm, I will take my leave for now. I will let you know."

"Yes, my lord. Thank you."

"Thank you, Lord Qiu!"

Chen Wentian led the immortal out of the residence and after a short while, returned to the garden. With the stranger gone, He Zhuoyan felt comfortable enough to start digging into the clothes covering her mother's chest.

Qiu Jingyi laughed helplessly and let the little bandit in who immediately latched on and began to suck greedily with a silly, contented smile.

"Husband, should we have told Lord Qiu about the lingzhi?" She asked.

Chen Wentian studied He Zhuoyan for a while before shaking his head, "He probably knows something but didn't say anything. It isn't difficult for someone like him to find out that I procured a Ruby Lingzhi Pill for you before you conceived. I've also been buying a large amount of precious lingzhi from suppliers throughout the city. That's not a secret either."

He stroked He Zhuoyan's head who merely squirmed around in complaint, "We have also given nourishing medicine made from lingzhi to the nursemaids but it is still not certain that this is the exact cause of her fixation. I had simply heard some rumors from the southern regions about this method and decided to try this out. There shouldn't be any downsides besides it costing some money."

His usage of lingzhi, a precious medicinal fungus, wasn't based on a casual whim. He had heard from various traders that it was highly prized in the Aiqin Mystic Archipelago which was south of the subcontinent. The region prized all kinds of herbs, fungi, and natural medicine. It was rumored that these were used to cultivate one's body into a cauldron, one that could produce spiritual medicines with even more efficiency and in higher concentrations.

What was happening to Qiu Jingyi and He Zhouyan and lingzhi was just a little harmless experiment, the most common one in fact. He had bought a few books from cultivators from the archipelago that

instructed how to improve a mother's breastmilk and turn her into a pseudo-cauldron to help the baby improve their foundation. So far, it seemed to be working but the results would take time to emerge.

He felt no need to report this to Qiu Chuyi or anyone else within the sect. The Beast God Sanctum was a place for beast transformation arts. They worshipped all things beasts and the southern cultivators could be considered a wholly different school of cultivation, one which focused on the human body and sought inspiration from within the human body instead of from beasts.

The He Xingping of old would have abhorred such a thing but Chen Wentian didn't care. As the master of the soul realm and many different souls, he was able to experience many different schools of thought and types of cultivation. He wasn't beholden to a single method, only the most effective one.

Chapter 616: Unique Taste

Chen Wentian remained in control of He Xingping's soul and body as he watched He Zhouyan nibble and nurse from her mother's breasts. He smiled widely as he sat down next to them and gently stroked the baby's head full of black hair. Although she was not his true daughter, the difference seemed small and inconsequential with every day that passed. He had no experience as a father but his soul as He Xingping did. It wasn't quite the same but it was still wonderful.

As for Qiu Jingyi, the wife of He Xingping that was brimming with happiness, he also studied her for a long time. She got plumper since giving birth. It was to be expected since she didn't do anything all day except eat, sleep, and feed the baby.

He reached over and rubbed her wide stomach, feeling her fullness and teasing her slightly. If he was still the Chen Wentian of the past with his shallow views on women, he would not have found her attractive. But he knew now that women could be beautiful in many different ways.

Gorgeous beauty that made the heavens jealous was still irresistible but there were also other forms of beauty. Qiu Jingyi displayed the beauty of a mother who loved her child. Shi Shi displayed a mature beauty that exuded experience, confidence, and independence. Even that cruel demoness, Qin Shui'er, had a kind of beauty that came from a difficult opponent who carried immeasurable danger.

It all depended on one's unique taste in beauty. And he had to admit that his tastes were broad and varied.

With a grin, Chen Wentian pulled He Zhuoyan away and handed her to the nearby nursemaid. She cried out but quickly found another breast to torment and quickly switched to coos of happiness.

Qiu Jingyi shot him a glare and covered her bare breasts, "Husband, what are you doing?"

"Xiao Yi..." He said softly as closed the distance between them now that a baby was no longer in the way, "Our daughter is so greedy, I was worried that she wouldn't save any for me."

As he said that, a hand gently kneaded one of her large breasts. His fingers paid special attention to her erect nipple which was a rosy red. He slowly rubbed the tip and gave her teasing squeezes.

"Look, there's almost nothing left," He complained.

It was true, her teats only surrendered several droplets of white milk and not the steady stream that sometimes happened when she was full and engorged.

"You... naughty boy... are my breasts that tasty?" She said, panting slightly.

He could feel her start to get into the mood. But that wasn't what he wanted. He wanted her milk. He loved the taste. It was sweet and creamy and unlike anything else. The medicinal regimen was doing wonders. Even as a grown man, he savored it. This could also be considered a unique taste he had recently developed.

He nuzzled her cheek with light kisses, "You're absolutely delicious."

His arms wrapped around her. One hand continued to play with her breasts while the other sneaked under the layers of the dress. Her legs obediently parted and granted him access. He wasted no time and started caressing her sensitive little nub, all the while whispering words of encouragement.

She started panting heavily and squirming in his grasp, not trying to escape but instead trying to bury herself deeper into his embrace.

"Husband..."

"No..."

"Husband..."

"Right there... Yesss..."

It didn't take long.

She always turned into putty in his hands. This was something that always made him proud. She was so sensitive and receptive to his touch. She came so easily but every time, it sent thrills down his spine and made him painfully erect.

She glanced up at him with hazy eyes, "Husband, what's gotten into you today?"

He laughed. Without saying anything, he removed his hand from between her legs and used his well-lubricated fingers to tease her nipples. Now with both hands, he kneaded and squeezed, trying to extract the prize he dearly wished to taste.

But her body was being stubborn so he finally had to pull out his trump card. It was a milky white pill the width of a coin. He placed it to her lips and urged her to swallow.

Afterward, she glared at him and pouted, "What was that?"

He gave her a kiss and answered, "That... is a very expensive replenishment pill for nursing mothers to replenish their spiritual energy and blood. It's called the White Miracle Pill. I obtained it from traders from the southern regions. It can help you recover in this specific situation."

She still didn't seem to understand but she soon fell into a dull trance as he steadily played with her breasts. At first, her body felt warm and comfortable. Then she was filled with vigor and energy. And as

the medicinal effects of the pill spread throughout her body, her breasts became heavier and heavier. Her nipples became extremely sensitive.

And finally, with only a gentle squeeze, fragrant white milk sprayed out like a fountain. He gave her another squeeze and her milk came out with great volume and pressure. Some of it sprayed two or three meters away and landed on the ground.

It was an amazing sight!

Chen Wentian quickly leaned down and caught some of it with his mouth, "MMmmm... delicious."

He sucked and drank a mouthful. He moved to her other breast and savored the same taste. He really liked it. It was quite perverse but he liked it anyway.

Qiu Jingyi played along. She was already used to this and learned to welcome it. She was surprised by the effectiveness of this mysterious pill but she had no complaints.

As her husband continued to suckle her breasts, she undid the buckles of his pants and freed his erection. While he was enjoying himself, she made sure to add to his enjoyment and gently stroked his shaft with her soft hands.

Chen Wentian moaned into her laden breasts. He experienced double the pleasure. He was being showered with precious milk while being jerked off lovingly at the same time. It was a thrilling experience, one that could not easily be reproduced anywhere else.

This was what life was all about; brand new experiences, intimate moments with people you cared about, and living exactly the way he wanted without rules.

His worries melted away as he savored the feeling of her hand gliding up and down his cock. The stresses of the world seemed insignificant before the wonders of a woman's body. What enemies from the Yang Clan of Great Waves, what demons hiding in the dark waters, he forgot about them all.

The final stroke of pleasure came as Qiu Jingyi managed to clamber on top and impale herself on him. As searing heat surrounded him from all sides, he still bathed under her milk which sprayed out in all directions from her nipples. His mouth was opened wide in an attempt to catch it all but it was impossible. Only when he finally came with a shuddering orgasm did he finally stop trying.

Chapter 617: Cultivation Situation

"So... this is what you do in your spare time?"

An unimpressed voice interrupted Chen Wentian's musings. He sat up from his reclining bamboo chair and cast a smile toward Zhou Ziyun. He had been in the middle of a daydream, a luxurious eagle-feathered fan hanging idly in one hand. His clothes were loose and messy. If could see himself, he looked more like a rich playboy than the master of an immortal sect.

"What? Something wrong?" He asked.

"Your disciples are all practicing diligently and yet their master is lazing around in the middle of the afternoon." She said with her arms crossed.

He shrugged, "I was taking care of some personal business. You know, have to keep my soul minions in line from time to time, the usual. Do you really want to know? I just finished with something quite interesting."

His expression must have given him away because she waved him off, "I don't want to know. Anyway, I wanted to ask what thoughts you had about our individual cultivation paths. Qingcheng and I are approaching the peak of the Spirit Initiate Realm and yet... let's just admit it. We don't really know what we are doing."

He frowned playfully and gestured to her, "Come here."

She was reluctant but he pulled her over with his spiritual energy. She neatly fell onto his lap and he laid back down on the recliner. Crossing his hands behind his head, he gave her a smile, "Ziyun, I will never believe that you don't know what you are doing at any time. So tell me, what are you thinking about?"

She snorted and shook her head. After gathering her thoughts, she looked at him with a serious expression and said, "This is my analysis of the current situation for all of your disciples. It is just my opinion but an honest one. First, the most obvious one, is Jasmine. Her cultivation is tied to her natural talents as a divine beast. Aside from the things you agreed to do for her with regards to the Beast God Sanctum and the three beast kings, there is not much for you to do except keep her fed and happy. There is no concern about her cultivation path."

"Agreed."

She nodded and raised five fingers, "The second easiest is the five ice sisters. Their Dao is pretty much set at this point as being the cultivation of a dual-attribute physique through the Summer and Winter's Eternal Sutra. They require your steady guidance and effort during dual-cultivation sessions but apart from that, there is little else to worry about in the short term for at least two or three years."

"Hey," He interjected, "What about that invitation from the Frostfire Nation? I was thinking that place might be interesting for them."

"I disagree, at least in the short term. We already have one sister entangled with the Order and the main continent. It is dangerous to bring five more there without proper preparation. In my opinion, we should wait until they have all stepped onto the immortal path and have reached the first lesser realm of Spiritual Growth. Ideally, we should wait until they reach the second lesser realm Spiritual Formation. Since their cultivation path is so clear and firm, we shouldn't take unnecessary risks."

Her words made sense and dissuaded his prior thoughts. There was indeed nothing good about the main continent. Although he was a Spirit King now, he could move freely or carelessly display his power. It was better to lay low for a while.

"Alright, you're right. Next?"

Zhou Ziyun spoke again, "Next is our new twelfth sister, Peng Lingxi. Her talent is tremendous and her ambition might be unmatched among us. Even if she didn't join us, I believe that she would have been able to continue cultivating the Lonely Sword Wanderer and reach the immortal realms. However, her potential should be much greater than merely the Spirit Lord Realm so she will require some effort on master's part to provide her with more powerful sword arts so that her path won't be prematurely cut off."

Chen Wentian nodded along, greatly impressed by her thoughts. He could see that Peng Lingxi's talent was far better than he had expected. If Zhou Ziyun could see that also at her cultivation level, it meant that her own talents were quite impressive as well.

Zhou Ziyun continued, "I feel that Sister Peng is a long-term project. She can get by with the Lonely Sword Wanderer and Dugu's Tenth Sword for the moment. Therefore, her cultivation does not need master's immediate attention."

"Mmm, I agree."

"Good, after her is Sister Wu. Although the limits of Sister Wu's innate abilities are still unknown, its nature and its relationship to the emotion of pain have been well-established. In essence, her way forward has been found though the path still remains foggy and filled with potential wrong turns. She will continue to need master's guidance but she can also explore some aspects independently given proper instruction. As such, in the short term, I believe that priority attention should be given to the other disciples that have yet to be mentioned and whose cultivation paths are still murky or unknown."

Chen Wentian stroked his chin and pondered the issue. Her evaluation of everyone's cultivation situation was quite accurate. The three disciples left over that she didn't mention yet urgently needed his attention.

"So... in your fair and balanced opinion," He said, "Out of you, Chengcheng, and Yingluo; which one of you should get my immediate attention? Who should I pick?"

Zhou Ziyun resisted his teasing and maintained a serious expression, "If we go by the lowest cultivation, it would be Sister Bei. If we go by urgency, Chengcheng and I might be a tie since we will soon reach the 10th Level of the Spirit Initiate Realm and we can't continue blindly. However, I think we should work on all three problems at the same time."

"We?"

"We, you and me."

"What do you propose?" He asked.

"We don't know what we don't know. We need more information, research, books, anything that can possibly help us, provide us a hint. And for all of that, I think we should take a trip to the Eastern Sanmu Metropolis."

He sighed, "Not the library again."

She punched his chest lightly, "Not just the library, large and small private book collections. There could be antique stores that might sell old tomes and worn-out scrolls. There might also be mortal cultivators that have encountered anything similar to our situations. With such a huge metropolis and so many people, the possibilities are endless. I'm sure we can find something!"

"Just you? And me?" He asked.

"Yeah."

He burst out laughing and pulled her into a hug, "Alright, let's go. It's a date!"

"It's not a date!" She protested helplessly.

Chapter 618: The Great Dao Preaching Convention (I)

It turned out not to be a date, not because he didn't want to go on a date but because of certain realities of his current situation. He was a Spirit King now but he didn't want anyone besides his disciples to know this fact so he couldn't move around carelessly. And especially, he couldn't visit the Eastern Sanmu Metropolis on a whim. There were other Spirit Kings there and he would not be able to maintain his cover.

Thus, when the teleportation array flashed with power and revealed two new arrivals, one of them was Zhou Ziyun while the other one looked like Chen Wentian but was not the real one. Instead, he was using Chen Mo's shadow body.

"Huh, this place looks different." Chen Wentian said, his head swiveling left and right.

They had expected to arrive in the city of Ember Cliffs in the Canyonland District. Instead, the distinctive red rocks of the city were some distance away. Instead of a busy city square, they were in the middle of a somewhat shabby village.

Above, amidst the clouds, a variety of flying boats zoomed in all directions, signifying that they had indeed come to the right place. Only in the capital of the subcontinent could one see such extravagance as a regular occurrence. On the ground, there was a steady flow of traffic along a busy road that led to the city from the village.

As the two of them descended the stairs of the teleportation array, Chen Wentian sensed them passing through a powerful protective array. Something like this definitely cost a lot of money and wasn't there before the last time they visited. As he focused his spiritual sense, he found several groups of strong cultivators that were studying them from afar. It didn't seem like they were interested in him or Zhou Ziyun because they quickly moved on to the next group of people that had arrived through the teleportation array.

"Security sure has increased after the demon attack." Zhou Ziyun said.

"It seems so. Though, I doubt these measures will be able to stop those two demons." He said.

"Probably not. But it's better than nothing. All these measures will at least let the residents sleep better at night."

The two of them chatted about random things as they strode toward the city. The new protections around the city meant that this outer teleportation array they arrived at was not connected to the teleportation arrays within the city. Visitors all had to travel some distance before they could actually reach the inner parts of the metropolis. And during that time, they would be under the scrutiny of many forces comprised of high-level cultivators from the four king sects.

Even so, Chen Wentian couldn't help but sense that Zhou Ziyun was attracting a lot of attention. He glanced sideways to get a better look at her. She really was quite beautiful today. He wondered if it was her outfit, or her makeup and jewelry.

She had chosen to wear a conservative yet exquisite outfit. It was embroidered with gold and silver. The silk fabric was a pale pink color like a fresh cherry blossom. Her long brown hair flowed down her back

but there was also an elegant knot at the top of her head that was adorned with a variety of pearls and precious gems. This arrangement only served to accentuate her slender neck and other delicate features.

She was normally so lowkey but this time, she exuded intelligence and sophistication like a proper noble lady. He wondered if she had lost weight. She was approaching twenty-two years old so perhaps she had matured to become even more beautiful.

He couldn't quite figure it out and it annoyed him greatly. He wished he could cover her face with a handkerchief so that the random people around them would stop ogling her. They didn't deserve to look at her. It wasn't right!

"Master," She said with a small laugh, "What's wrong?"

She was teasing him. She probably guessed his thoughts already but he didn't want to admit defeat. He pulled her to him and held her close so that they were walking arm in arm.

"So you did want to go on a date with me." He said in a low voice.

"It's not a date." She protested again.

"Then why did you have to look so pretty today?"

She laughed a delighted laugh that proved that he was right. She had also wanted it to be a date. He had twelve disciples now so it was a rare chance for her to solely occupy his time. Although it wasn't a true date because this wasn't his real body, it was better than nothing.

"Since you said it's not a date, then it's not a date." Chen Wentian said, "But I will make it up to you next time. We can go anywhere you want."

Zhou Ziyun understood what he meant and gave his arm an appreciative squeeze.

"So where do you want to go first? The library?" He asked.

"Of course, the library. Where else?"

He sighed playfully which earned him another laugh.

They continued walking towards the city. He could have flown but both took the time to enjoy each other's company. But when they reached the start of the red cliffs, they encountered a lively crowd that surrounded a small stage. Several cultivators wearing distinctive robes of cultivation sects stood up there, shouting over the noise of the crowd.

"Come all, come all, the Great Dao Preaching Convention is being held three days from now!"

"All disciples of mortal sects can buy a ticket! Get yours before they sell out!"

"Get your chance to listen to experts from immortal sects preaching the Dao!"

"Get your chance to submit questions and have these experts give your pointers!"

They took turns shouting the slogans, getting more and more people to spend their money on tickets to this event.

Zhou Ziyun tugged on Chen Wentian's arm and they paused to watch the barely contained chaos. "The Great Dao Preaching Convention? Sounds interesting, can we go?"

"Us?" He replied in surprise, "This thing is just for the various immortal sects of the metropolis to perform some community service. Whatever Dao they preach to the mortal cultivators won't be any secret arts or true immortal Dao. And even if they can actually help a mortal cultivator with one thing or another, the best they can do is help them reach the upper levels of the Spirit Initiate Realm. There's no chance those doing the preaching will pass down anything of great value."

She pursed her lips, unconvinced, "Which sects will be there to do the preaching?"

He shrugged, "Usually it's just a few random immortal sects within the metropolis and perhaps a small number from the outside provinces. But..."

He trailed off as he noticed the uniforms the people on the stage were wearing. They were very distinctive. They belonged to each of the four Spirit King Realm factions within the city. He realized that with so many Spirit Lords dead from the demon attack, the Spirit Kings were finally forced into action. Their participation in this convention was a small bit of goodwill towards the subcontinent for their failures.

"Actually..." He said and started walking towards the stage, "This does seem interesting."

Chapter 619: The Great Dao Preaching Convention (II)

The purpose of their visit this time was to gather information about various cultivation paths and methods. The main library managed by the Immortal Association was a good resource and it was their first target but it wasn't the only possibility. Chen Wentian didn't know something like the Great Dao Preaching Convention was taking place but it seemed like a good opportunity to learn. At least, it will be a good opportunity for his disciple.

Zhou Ziyun's cultivation progress was something that still confused him. She didn't have a specific ability like Lin Qingcheng or Wu Qianyu. She simply practiced what everyone else was practicing, just better. She was better at comprehending Summer and Winter's Eternal Sutra than the ice sisters even though she did not have any natural talent with ice or fire. She was better at comprehending the Nineteen Demon Subduing Palms than any other disciple. She was also the only one who managed to learn the Flying Dragon Saber Art. She also dabbled in Dugu's Tenth Sword and her understanding of the sword could rival Wu Qianyu and perhaps even Peng Lingxi.

And through learning all of these various secret arts and immortal Daos, her cultivation in the Spirit Initiate Realm steadily progressed. Even though she had no specific Dao for herself, she was still able to reach the 8th Level of the Spirit Initiate Realm just by absorbing knowledge from these different sources.

"Hey you, give me two tickets to the convention!" Chen Wentian called out over the crowd.

A surge of spiritual energy carried his voice to the stage and the four cultivators there turn in his direction. Their expressions stiffened for a moment at the arrival of an immortal but they quickly recovered. As disciples of the king sects, they had seen too many Spirit Lords so they did not act too courteously.

"Sir immortal, may I ask your great name?" The most senior one asked.

"Immortal Blue Dragon Chen Wentian, master of Ten Thousand Flower Valley." Chen Wentian answered simply, "And my disciple here is Zhou Ziyun."

The crowd murmured to themselves at his response. His name was somewhat well known after the Immortal Sect Competition. However, since the competition was for sects outside of the metropolis, many locals were still unaware.

The fellow on the stage with the blue robes replied, "Well met, well met. I am Ming Liu, a disciple of the Eastern Light Clan. I have heard of the name Immortal Blue Dragon and the recent feats of your disciples. If Lord Chen wishes to attend the convention, we will naturally give you tickets free of charge."

That said, he drew out two small jade tokens and placed them in a wooden box. He offered the box with both hands.

"Many thanks." Chen Wentian retrieved it and looked inside.

Besides the jade tokens, there was a paper scroll that described the location, time, and various activities during the event.

He put the box away and was about to turn and leave when that Ming Liu spoke again.

"Lord Chen, please wait!"

"What's the matter?" Chen Wentian asked.

Ming Liu smiled in a way that did not seem genuine, "Lord Chen, as you know, this Great Dao Preaching Convention is an opportunity for the mortal masses to listen to those of us that are cultivating the immortal path preach the Dao. This allows us to showcase our knowledge, our skills, and our comprehension of the great Dao. It also allows the people to learn about things they may not normally get an opportunity to. This is an important goal for the convention. Other immortal sects can naturally attend but..."

He paused and gave an embarrassed laugh, "I hope you won't mind me asking, Lord Chen. It is customary for attendees from other immortal sects also participate in some of the Dao preaching events. I hope that Lord Chen's talented disciple can make some contributions for the sake of the common people."

With those words, the atmosphere of the crowd suddenly changed. Ming Liu's words were not unkind but they were an obvious challenge. The people around them mostly consisted of residents of the Canyonland District as well as visitors from other districts. They were eager to see how a bunch of outsiders would react.

"Oh?" Chen Wentain responded lightly, "My Zhou Ziyun is a little clever but she is not as talented as you have assumed. I'm afraid that she might make a fool of herself."

"How can that be? Lord Chen is too humble." This time, the person who spoke wore the pale-gold uniform of the Huang Family, "How can Ten Thousand Flower Valley, who produced the likes of the Paragon of Righteousness Wu Qianyu and where Snow Fairy Long Yifei calls home, have a disciple that is not a talent?"

That man's words drew a lot of nods from the crowd and whispers of agreement. Although an impartial audience would have immediately found the logical fallacies in his statement, these people were not impartial to begin with.

Chen Wentian crossed his arms and answered, "My disciple's time is very precious. If the disciples of the four king sects want to compete with mine, then you better bring out some respectable people. My disciple has not time to argue with riff-raff."

All four on the stage bristled at this but they didn't dare argue with an immortal like him. Instead, Ming Liu waved them off and spoke for them, "Of course, Lord Chen. The Great Dao Preaching Convention will be attended by our best, the very best of the younger generation. I don't know if you have heard of Prince Huang, Huang Yaoying, the most dazzling young genius that the Huang Family has produced in

five hundred years. No, then what about Deng Lun, the Gentle Scholar, the undisputed leader of the youths of Lotus Tower? If these are not enough, we also have in attendance Little Devil Tang Liang from the House of Armament and Brilliant Blue Ming Yuqi from the Eastern Light Clan!"

The gathered crowd brimmed with excitement. These four names were enough to elicit many emotions from the ordinary populace. Admiration, jealousy, and reverie; these were just a few. Although peasants and country bumpkins from the various provinces might not have heard of them, they were like gods within the metropolis. They represented the next generation, people who would surely become Spirit Lords and perhaps even take over as Spirit Kings for their factions.

Chen Wentian looked over at Zhou Ziyun with raised eyebrows, "What do you think? Do you still want to go?"

Zhou Ziyun narrowed her eyes and scoffed, "Why not? I'm not afraid. No matter how great they are, can they compare to the likes of Sister Wu, Sister Long, or even Sister Peng? Since the four king sects aren't holding back for this Dao preaching convention, then I want to go and learn as much as I can."

He smiled, "Good."

He then turned towards the stage with a stern expression, "Surnamed Ming, I know that you challenged me and my disciple on instructions from your higher-ups so I won't make things difficult for you. You can tell them that my talented disciple will participate in the events. I hope that they won't be disappointed or jealous when her brilliance outshines the rest."

He then laughed arrogantly and flew away with Zhou Ziyun.

Chapter 620: Gifts and Bloodlines

A short flight and a hop through the teleportation array later, Chen Wentian and Zhou Ziyun arrived at the Sky District. They didn't pay attention to the tall skyscraping pagodas around them and headed straight for the library.

"You're not mad... are you?" He asked.

She snorted, "Why would I be mad?"

"That I signed you up for some Dao preaching competition."

"I'll be fine. Worst case, I make a fool of myself and make you lose a lot of face."

"Hahaha! I have complete faith in you."

"Mmmhmm."

They both left it at that and arrived at the entrance to the library. The building was also a pagoda that stood ten stories tall. The sides were made of white stone while the roof tiles were red. It was a curious sight, a beacon of knowledge amidst the forest of tall buildings. It was one of the few benefits the Immortal Association provided to the human population under their protection.

Only, this benefit required a lot of money.

"Two people, that will be two hundred kilograms of red spiritual crystal for a one-day pass." Said the dispassionate voice of the clerk behind the welcome desk.

Chen Wentian tried to give the person the stink eye but they weren't even looking in his direction. He made a noise of disapproval and dropped a sack of money on the counter. It disappeared in a flash and two wooden badges appeared in its place.

"Bloodthirsty..." He muttered as he took them.

Although he wasn't a poor immortal, it was still a lot of money. The amount could have helped Lin Qingcheng accept a few hundred more disciples to her House of Paradise or it could have paid for Jasmine's unsatiable appetite for about a week. It really was difficult being a sect master.

Zhou Ziyun, suddenly happy, grabbed his arm with a skip in her step, "Where should we go first? I remember you mentioning that there was quite a big section about sword Daos here. Maybe we can find something that will help Sister Wu in forming her Sorrowful Sword Style?"

"She's been hanging around Lingxi a lot lately so she should be fine."

"Then what about elemental arts?"

"No, I have somewhere in mind. Come."

Chen Wentian led up the stairs to the highest floor. It was almost empty here and they didn't see anyone as they walked through the aisles filled with dusty tomes and fragile scrolls. As they studied the room, section by section, he explained his thought process and goals.

At this point, his highest priority was to understand the disciples that had special and inexplicable skills. Besides Long Yifei who was learning from a great power within the main continent, the others were not so fortunate. Wu Qianyu aside, the ones he needed to help the most were Lin Qingcheng, Zhou Ziyun, and Bei Yingluo, to uncover the secrets of their abilities.

From what he knew of secret abilities, there were an endless number of them in this limitless world of cultivation. But, they mostly fell under two categories, gifts and bloodlines.

The most mysterious were gifts bestowed by the heavens through fortune or a blessing of pure luck. The will of heaven was fickle and could randomly gift a person with no cultivation background a rare physique or strange ability. These were the most difficult to predict.

Unlike powerful secret arts and great Daos, gifts could not be learned, only born. Sometimes, it would result in a world-shaking genius that could upend the established hierarchy. But oftentimes, they would run into greater powers and be destroyed, turned into oblivion before they could reach their full potential.

Unlike heavenly gifts that appeared out of nowhere, bloodlines were the work of human reproduction. Although they could appear suddenly akin to gifts, they had a specific source, whether it was their immediate parents or a hidden ancestor many generations ago.

It was a well-known fact that humans were a highly adaptable race and that their blood was a powerful incubator for powers from other races. Some special traits that first appeared as a heavenly gift could be

passed down from generation to generation. If their bloodline was properly maintained through selective breeding, they might be able to create a permanent power through the might of the blood.

Certain human bloodlines were also known to contain blood from powerful spiritual beasts. Some human clans did more than emulate beasts and actually stole their blood. Divine beasts were an especially attractive target as they had the strongest and most coveted abilities. Some humans hunted divine beasts for this purpose. But it was also rumored that some humans lived together in harmony with beasts and took their blood as a sign of honor and friendship.

In this sense, Chen Wentian's blue dragon powers could be considered a kind of bloodline power. It did not completely come from his blue dragon soul but the source of fire that it left behind before it died. Because of this source of fire that dragons usually only left for their own kin, he could temporarily transform his body into one akin to a dragon. There was a trace of dragon blood in his veins and his bones were tough as a dragon's. Even if he did not have the blue dragon soul, he would have still been able to wield blue dragon flames although it would have been somewhat weaker.

And it was entirely possible that he was not the only human with the powers of divine beasts. It wasn't difficult to imagine grand royal families and ancient noble lineages residing in blessed realms and holy worlds that have stubbornly held onto bloodlines stolen from divine beasts.

Finally, human bloodlines didn't come from just beasts but also demons and other races. Demon bloodlines were especially powerful and strange. There were all kinds of demons in the world with a myriad of powers. Those humans that cultivated demon bloodlines could either kill demons and rob their blood or they could even be demon worshippers, having completely fallen to the enemy of their own race.

These demon worshippers were even worse than actual demons. The Immortal Association had a standing order to wipe out all demon worshippers and their kin, down to every last chicken and pet dog. Everything had to be wiped out where demon worshippers existed.

"Therefore," Chen Wentian concluded after the long lecture, "To address an unknown power, we need to establish where it came from, a heavenly gift or a hidden bloodline. If it is heaven's gift, then there is nothing to worry about. Qingcheng, Qianyu, Yingluo, or you, if your ability was a gift, then we will simply rejoice and we can cultivate it without worry. But if your ability came from a bloodline, we will have to proceed carefully."

"How so?" Zhou Ziyun asked.

"The best case is that it is a hidden human bloodline. Perhaps one of your parents is the great-great-great-descendant of some folks that got lost in the subcontinent. These human factions with bloodlines are often more powerful than the Spirit King Realm. Things can get messy if your secret ability attracts their attention. They might want you back and they might be unruly and too powerful for me to handle."

"If the bloodline came from beasts, which is probably unlikely in your cases, it will definitely attract greedy people from all directions. The news of divine beasts always brings out the worst in us. Greedy and jealousy are difficult to defeat and there has been endless bloodshed over these matters."

He sighed and shook his head, "But if the bloodline came from demons, this is the most worrisome. I don't have to repeat myself with regard to demon worshippers. But even for clans that kill demons and steal their blood, there is a certain sense of taboo about them across the land. They are often looked down upon and sometimes even outright outlawed. They will not only face the wrath of demons but the narrow-minded opinions of other people. They may even be hunted and killed by their own side."